



News Release

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Babitz Appointed Health Systems Improvement Director

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) announced today that Dr. Marc Babitz is the new director of the Division of Health Systems Improvement. Babitz replaces Iona Thraen who now directs the UDOH's patient safety initiatives.

As director for the Division of Health Systems Improvement, Babitz will oversee four major public health programs including Emergency Medical Services; Child Care Licensing; Health Facility Licensing, Certification and Resident Assessment; and Primary Care and Rural Health.

“Dr. Babitz has had a distinguished career in public health and academic medicine and will be a great asset to the Department,” said Dr. David Sundwall, Executive Director, UDOH. “He understands the healthcare system well and from a number of perspectives. His insight will be invaluable as the department regulates and oversees the provider industries such as hospitals, nursing homes and ambulance services.”

Babitz has spent his professional career in public service with a desire to help improve the public's health. Babitz began his career with the U.S. Public Health Service, serving in a variety of roles, including service as a healthcare provider for underserved populations, program administrator, trainer and educator, and program developer. At the University of Utah School of Medicine he has been a teacher, mentor and advisor to medical students, physician assistant students and family medicine residents.

“I see my job in this important position at the Utah Department of Health as another opportunity to be of service by serving and protecting the health of the citizens of Utah,” said Babitz.

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Babitz will continue to direct the programs in Family Medicine at the University of Utah. “I am confident Dr. Babitz will be a great asset to the Department and will strengthen our collaboration with the University of Utah Health Sciences,” said Sundwall.

Babitz is a graduate from the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. He completed his Family Medicine Residency training at the Community Hospital of Sonoma County in Santa Rosa, California. In 1975, he joined the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service in order to practice in a rural, medically underserved community in Northern California. After nine years of practice, he was transferred to the headquarters of the NHSC to serve as its Chief Medical Officer. In 1987, he transferred to Denver, Colorado as the Regional Clinical Coordinator for a six state area, providing clinical oversight for federal programs. In 1994, he joined the University of Utah Department of Family and Preventive Medicine as the Director of pre-doctoral programs.

Editors Note: A digital photo of Dr. Babitz can be provided by request. Send request to smcdonald@utah.gov

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.